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THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #92, August 31 – September 20, 2006 A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

A Flood of Memories

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TO NEW ORLEANS

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Residents of a FEMA trailer camp face an uncertain future.
PHOTO: WILLIE DAVIS / VERAS

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WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 120 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The *Indydependent* is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write and distribute for *The Indydependent*, videotape events and rallies, update the website, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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PHOTO: KAITLYN TIKKUN

OPPONENTS SQUARE OFF AT ATLANTIC YARDS HEARING

Over 1,000 people attended the Aug. 23 public hearings for Bruce Ratner's massive Atlantic Yards development project. Supporters of the billion-dollar project, who stand to benefit directly, were out in force. Carpenters Union members who will get jobs and ACORN activists, who have been promised affordable housing, packed the meeting. Opponents cited traffic problems, displacement of current residents, and poor air quality as reasons to reject the proposed 22-acre complex that would include the tallest buildings in Brooklyn. Others countered that the massive public subsidies would mean little economic benefit and that 40 percent of the affordable housing would rent for more than \$2,000 a month.

Another public meeting is scheduled for Sept. 12, at the New York City College of Technology (Klittgord Auditorium) 285 Jay St., Brooklyn. For more information, visit *DevelopDontDestroy.org* or call (718) 596-5410 to contact the city directly.

SURPRISE! COPS BACK DOWN ON ASSEMBLY RESTRICTIONS

BY EUGENE KARMAZIN

As a regular participant in Critical Mass bike rides during the two years following the Republican National Convention, I have been chased and harassed by every NYPD vehicle in their repertoire: scooters, motorcycles, golf carts, squad cars, SUVs, unmarked sedans and helicopters. I've been rammed by a police scooter with such force that it wedged my chain into my bike frame. I nearly broke my neck falling off my bike when an unmarked police SUV charged against traffic at us, sending one rider over the hood. Many times I've narrowly avoided the plastic netting that the NYPD uses to trap cyclist at intersections.

And still, the NYPD has failed to break the leaderless bike ride. So it was no particular shock that they would try to issue regulations limiting the number of people able to freely congregate without their expressed permission. Specifically, any non-approved gathering of more than 20 cyclists, 35 pedestrians or any two people violating a traffic law, such as jaywalking, would be considered parading without a permit and the "offenders" subject to arrest.

It did come as a surprise when the proposed regulations were abruptly withdrawn on Aug. 18 – the NYPD is not known for back-pedaling. Here are a couple of reasons why it happened:

The regulations were simply too provocative, angering too many people at the same time. The city council, for instance, was embittered – legislation is, after all, their bag. The cycling community was up in arms, since we are the primary targets. The regulations were so broad as to even threaten the Central Park crowd: they regularly engage in group cycling and running. And, of course, people who simply took all that freedom of congregation stuff seriously were outraged.

The other key factor is this: Through years of NYPD harassment a variety of groups are now working together to defend the rights of cyclists and others threatened by the police and the city government. This formed a united front against the regulations. These groups – New York City Bike Coalition, Transportation Alternatives, the National Lawyers Guild, New York Civil Liberties Union and Time's Up! were instrumental in halting the regulations and channeling the energies of vast numbers of individuals who banded together to ensure that we maintain control of our streets.



PHOTO: JEN YUSON

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



FOX NEWS OF THE LEFT

As a subscriber, I am writing to protest your coverage of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. It is so blatantly anti-Israel that it's absurd! It's like you're the Fox News of the Left!

If you do not restore balance to your coverage, I will not be renewing my subscription, and I will discourage my friends from renewing theirs.

—DAVID BLANCHARD
NEW JERSEY

could be applied to Israel. However seeing these first person stories shows the other side and that is what independent media should do.

—NAME WITHHELD

A SIMPLE EQUATION
Zionism = manifest destiny = racism = death.

A ghetto is a ghetto. An oppressor is an oppressor regardless if s/he has a star of David or a swastika as an armband.

—YARA DERSHOWITZ

IN THE FIRST PERSON

It's good to see that the *Indy* is doing first persons again (Aug. 10 – "First Person—Leaving Israel"). What a breath of fresh air to hear from Israelis who are resisting. From an American's perspective, I think many foreigners think we are all Bush supporting war mongers and the same

ZIONISM ISN'T WHAT YOU THINK IT IS
Zionism, as an ideology, did not define Arabs as "savages" (Aug. 10 – "A Short History of Zionism"). Some Zionists certainly did and some did not. These sort of generalizations are similar to those of conserva-

tives who equate anarchism with terrorism. Neither is accurate. Both are examples of opinion masquerading as scholarship.

—EVAN M. DANIEL
NEW YORK

THE NIGHTMARE OF ZIONISM

Injustice is injustice even if you wrap it in nice gift paper and tie a pretty pink bow around it. The killing of innocent civilians and taking their homes is neither justified nor right. Zionism (Aug. 10 – "A Short History of Zionism") and the rise of the state of Israel, no matter how much you try to sugarcoat it, has been the cause of many wars and resulted in many deaths in the Arab world.

—DIANA BEIRUT

Jonathan vs. Goliath: Taking on Clinton and the Iraq War

BY NICHOLAS ALLANACH

Sen. Hillary Clinton caught a break – if an incumbent with a war chest of tens of millions in corporate money needed one – when NY1 cancelled her debate with anti-war challenger Jonathan Tasini.

The television station nixed the debate because Tasini didn’t fulfill their requirement that candidates have half a million in the bank to participate, though he polled 13 percent at the time, well over their five percent threshold rule. Critics point out that Time Warner, which owns NY1, forked over \$100,000 to the Clinton campaign, which may have influenced its decision.

Tasini’s insurgent campaign says Clinton is afraid to debate him about the war and other core progressive issues, and NY1’s decision amounted to “censorship.”

Unlike Sen. Clinton, Tasini suffers no illusions about the war and indicates each day of this campaign that he can better represent the liberal base Clinton ignored when giving President Bush authorization to storm Iraq.

Clinton has recently taken “responsibility for her vote.” But, as Tasini notes, “this doesn’t mean she’s off the hook.” Tough words from a man who, at first glance, would seem to pose no threat to the Clinton juggernaut. However, if Tasini has the support he claims, then Clinton’s pro-war vote might not only complicate an easy re-election bid to the U.S. Senate, but could also deter local support for a White House run in 2008.

If Hillary Clinton is a “stay the course” candidate then Jonathan Tasini is most certainly the “change the course” alternative. Tasini claims most people “can not say what policy position [of Clinton’s] they support.”

Tasini trumpets his progressive positions over Clinton’s centrist triangulation. Tasini supports environmental initiatives (like the Apollo Alliance), laws to help workers join unions without management interference, healthcare (“universal” instead of “affordable”) and ending the war in Iraq. Moreover, Tasini is not afraid to say he is “100 percent pro-choice” and that he also “supports same-sex marriage, period.”

Many of the positions that he takes on hot-button issues will most certainly isolate him from traditional beltway backing. Tasini takes a nuanced view on dealing with terrorism and national security, instead of bolstering the usual “U.S. will stand beside Israel”

rhetoric (as spouted by Sen. Clinton at a rally outside the United Nations). Tasini opts for a more balanced assessment of the crisis.

“We must be honest and realize our one-sided policy has played a hand in provoking this recent conflict. In fact, I believe [in a] two-state solution that recognizes an independent Palestinian state.”

Some Democrats who support Sen. Clinton continue picturing her as the liberal she once was. Where Clinton once favored universal healthcare, she currently toes Big Pharma and the insurance indus-

try’s line couched in “affordable access” language. And, Clinton rakes it in – she’s received \$22 million mainly from corporate benefactors such as Goldman Sachs, Citigroup and Met Life. Clinton was also a Wal-Mart board member from 1985 to 1992, though unions have lined up behind her.

Tasini is a former president of the National Writers Union and led a landmark case for free-lance writers’ rights against the *New York Times*.

This fall New Yorkers can choose to vote for the establishment candidate Clinton or vote their beliefs and Tasini.



Jonathan Tasini, A challenger to Clinton in the upcoming Sept. 12 primary. PHOTO: NICHOLAS ALLANACH

THE ANTIWAR ELECTORAL INSURGENCY

By launching a Democratic primary campaign against Hillary Clinton, Jonathan Tasini may be providing an antiwar option for voters, but Clinton’s prominence and war chest make her a shoo-in in the Sept. 12 primary.

Both the Green Party and the Socialist Equality Party are running candidates on antiwar platforms against Clinton in the November general election. The Socialist Equality Party collected over 24,000 signatures in their bid to put Bill Van Auken on the ballot against Clinton. The Green Party collected over 30,000 signatures to qualify their slate of progressive candidates. Howie Hawkins is the Green candidate challenging Hillary Clinton’s \$22 million re-election bid with a grassroots effort that

has so far raised a little over \$15,000.

“The David versus Goliath thing is there, [but] people want to vote against the war,” said Hawkins, whose platform calls for national health insurance, a focus on renewable energy and the environment and an end to the war in Iraq.

Hawkins’ campaign is now focused on forcing Clinton into a debate. “We can’t let Clinton get away without debating the Iraq War,” said Hawkins, who hopes his candidacy will continue the antiwar sentiment generated by the higher-profile Tasini Campaign. “It’s important that Tasini supporters keep going with the antiwar electoral insurgency,” said Hawkins.

—ERIN THOMPSON



Spitzer’s Real Deal

After months of promises, Democratic front-runner for governor Eliot Spitzer elaborated on his thin housing platform in a roundtable discussion with tenant organizers on Aug. 16. Spitzer has been coasting on high poll numbers as a gaggle of Democrats try to curry favor with his campaign. Dems from the conservative Ed Koch to progressive pro-choice groups have endorsed Spitzer. The only problem is that Spitzer is reluctant to take strong positions that protect tenants and which offend the real-estate industry.

Spitzer’s non-commitment on core issues to tenants, like “home rule” over rent and eviction laws and strengthening rent regulation and affordable housing programs, have irked tenant groups, long shutout from Gov. Pataki’s Albany.

Spitzer said he wants to lift the \$2,000 vacancy de-control threshold on rent stabilized apartments and tie it to the cost of living. Currently, a landlord can de-control an apartment when the rent surpasses \$2,000 and there is a vacancy. The problem with Spitzer’s proposal is that a landlord can jack up the rent by 20 percent each time someone moves out of a stabilized apartment. Once an apartment hits \$2,000 it’s not affordable to many tenants. Once de-controlled, the sky is the limit for the rent and there are fewer tenant protections.

Spitzer has committed to cracking down on slumlords by allowing more autonomy on a local level to set up administrative tribunals. Ostensibly, the tribunals would rein in slumlords who refuse to make repairs by making them pay fines through methods similar to paying for parking tickets.

The measure would be “a good step,” according to Jeanie Dubnau of Riverside Edgecombe Neighborhood Association, even though “[tribunals] don’t impact much on affordability.”

However, if Spitzer really wanted to protect the city’s rent stabilized stock, he would END de-control of regulated apartments and expand rent regulation to all rental apartments. It’s ironic that Spitzer favors more local autonomy on cracking down on slumlords, but doesn’t trust local governments to have control over rent and eviction laws. Tenant groups made this message clear when they shut down the Rent Guidelines Board hearing in June. New York City Council members are more accountable to the city’s voters than upstate rural and suburban lawmakers. At the roundtable, Loretta Burns from Coalition for the Homeless pressed Spitzer on home rule, but he did not offer to support it.

Equally troubling are statements from his campaign manager, Ryan Toohey said in *The Real Deal*, a real estate publication. “Eliot has always had a particular understanding and affinity for the real estate industry because it’s in his blood... [I]f he wasn’t doing what he is doing now, he’d be in real estate.” Spitzer’s father is a millionaire real estate developer.

Spitzer did score points with tenants when he pledged to enforce rent laws and criticized the state housing agency – one reason tenant advocates are strident about home rule. He also gave lip service to Mitchell-Lama residents, whose landlords are scheming to take them out of the affordable housing program. His shining moment was pledging state money (currently it kicks in nothing) for operating subsidies for public housing, though there are no plans to build more public housing.

Bennett Baumer is a tenant organizer with the Metropolitan Council on Housing. To contact visit MetCouncil.net or Bennett@MetCouncil.net

NEW YORK

HAITIAN STRONGMAN GUILTY OF RAPE

A federal judge has ruled against Emmanuel “Toto” Constant, the alleged leader of the paramilitary group FRAPH (Revolutionary Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti), which is accused of the brutal rape and beating of three Haitian women.

The Center for Justice and Accountability in San Francisco launched the suit in 2004 on behalf of the three women, identified only as ‘Jane Does.’ Constant, who has lived in Queens since 1996, never responded to the complaint, which cleared the way for a lawsuit, said District Judge Sidney Stein in an Aug. 16 hearing. A hearing on Aug. 29 will determine whether damages will be paid to the three women.

FRAPH terrorized supporters of Jean-Bertrand Aristide during the elected president’s ouster in 1993-1994. The death squad is responsible for killing hundreds of slum dwellers, say human rights groups.

Constant has also been arraigned on separate charges of grand larceny, forgery and falsifying business records.

SUBWAY SEARCHES UPHELD

The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the concerns of civil libertarians and ruled on Aug. 11 that random, suspicionless container searches do not violate the Fourth Amendment because they are designed to prevent terrorist attack, the search is minimally intrusive and the program is reasonably effective. The Court ruled that “a subway rider has a full expectation of privacy in his [sic] containers,” but since travelers may decline to be searched if they leave the subway, the program is narrowly tailored to achieve the government’s objectives.

The decision affirms District Court judge Richard Berman who conducted a hasty, two-day trial on limited evidence last fall, after denying the NYCLU the right to find out any of the particulars of how the program is being implemented. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is unlikely. Go to flexyourrights.org to see a citizen’s guide to refusing a subway search.

COURT COOKS EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

Transgendered folks won a case in New York Supreme Court that effectively bars gender preference discrimination in employment. Eric Buffong, a cook at a Westchester County restaurant, claimed the discrimination started when a co-worker brought in a high school yearbook picturing Buffong as female. Soon, Buffong’s hours diminished and he endured harassment by co-workers. Management fired him in May 2005. Though state law does not specifically restrict discrimination against transgendered persons, courts have interpreted New York State’s Human Rights Law on the ground that the word ‘sex’ in the statute covers transgendered people. Prominent queer rights groups, including Empire State Pride Agenda, refused to advocate for language protecting transgendered people in an effort to enact the Employment Non-Discrimination Act at the state level a few years ago, fearing it would doom the legislation. Justice Joan Lefkowitz’s Aug. 9 decision reasoned that stereotyped views about gender often amount to sex discrimination. Buffong is suing for \$3 million in damages.

Home Is Where Hate Is

Two recent movies try to resurrect our national spirit: Oliver Stone’s *World Trade Center* and Spike Lee’s *When the Levees Broke*. The drama and documentary both witness tragedy through the eyes of people hoping for rescue and through them the audience is healed.



In *World Trade Center*, Nicolas Cage and Michael Pena play two Port Authority policemen trapped under a mountain of rubble. The men are metaphors for the resilient American Spirit. They lie pinned under debris and talk in the dark. Near death, the men see with clarity the small moments of family that gave life meaning. In these scenes domestic life becomes an Eden and they refuse the comfort of sleep and death to come home.

The audience is supposed to experience catharsis from the terror through their survival. When they are pulled out of the rubble each wears a mask of ash as many of us did after Sept. 11. It was a mask that made us temporarily white, uniting us.

Opposing this is Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levees Broke*. The patriotic unity of Sept. 11 is absent. The white mask of ash is washed off by the flood. We see how color and class divide us. The survivors tell of being abandoned. No one is a metaphor for salvation; instead, each is a real person hoping for it. If in *World Trade Center*, the memory of home kept men alive, in Lee’s film it becomes a source of pain as an exposed ruin. The families of New Orleans can visit but cannot rebuild and so the death of their city is forever final.

Eventually the interviewees turn to anger that builds to hand-shaking rage. It is those hands that may shake our complacency. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” He meant that none of us will ever know a lasting peace until we all come home.

—NICHOLAS POWERS



Nattonette Smith, 19, explained while working at the Bewitched Club, “I’m a singer. I strip to make money but I sing to survive.” PHOTO: WILLIE DAVIS/VERAS



One of FEMA's largest trailer parks, the Diamond Group Site in Louisiana's Plaquemines Parish, has 450 trailers. It's been built 45 minutes outside of downtown New Orleans, and many of its residents don't have vehicles necessary for commuting to jobs. PHOTO: WILLIE DAVIS/VERAS

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

People are still drowning in New Orleans. The waters have receded but a year later those of us who waded through it carry the flood in our eyes. Driving through New Orleans, I see dry streets and people walking and catch myself blinking back memory that seems more real than sight.

I came back to see the premiere of Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levees Broke*. Over 12,000 people gathered in the New Orleans Arena for the premiere. Survivors and celebrities shook hands and hugged. The camera flash made visible the victims who in the borrowed light of fame become part of history. I saw Mayor Ray Nagin. Reporters held microphones to his face. In the crush I asked him about the Ninth Ward and the thousands of homeless stranded in trailers. He never answered.

So the next day I went in search of the trailers. I drove an hour out of New Orleans to the FEMA Diamond Group Site to find rows of white trailers baking in the sun. At least 1,800 people live in the camp. A few weeks ago I could not have come here. FEMA blocked reporters from talking to evacuees. After public pressure, they allowed the media in but the news had moved on to Lebanon.

The residents are stranded in poverty. There are no public phones and people’s cell phones are turned off because they can’t pay the bill. I watched evacuees walk around aimlessly in the heat. Few people there have cars and those that do drive them around in slow circles. There is no where to go except the bottom of a can of beer.

“A lot of them hang out and get drunk,” said David Capone, the park manager. “That’s how they lived before the hurricane.”

Men sat on cars drinking, numbing themselves to the passing of time. Some numbed more than boredom. Mark Saint-Anne, a cop-py man with fuzzy corn-rows recently returned from a tour in Iraq. “I got shot at, lost friends and it was just for oil,” he said. I asked him how his spirit was holding up. “Not one-hundred percent there but I’m able to... you know,” he shrugged.

The pressure was building in the camp. A woman leaned on the rail. “Don’t come over with that shit. I’ll knock your fucking teeth out,” she yelled to a little girl who began hur-

rying away, head down. “Don’t worry. I know her,” the woman said.

A photographer who accompanied me told me of a kid with swollen lips and a bruised eye. How many children were dodging curses and fists? The silence dividing them from the world was dividing them from each other. Night came and kids played basketball in the shadows. Someone parked a motorcycle near them and left the headlight on. There was nothing else to do but play games in the dim light.

While evacuees still live in FEMA camps Mayor Nagin has readied their neighborhoods for demolition. With his tacit approval the City Council passed ordinance 22203, which decreed that homes not gutted by Aug. 29 could be bulldozed. A race between land developers and home owners has begun. If the real estate moguls win, one of the oldest Black neighborhoods in the city will disappear. Slaves and their descendants lived here and passed from generation to generation the memory and music to remind the world how sweet freedom is.

LOWER NINTH ROOTS

In the Lower Ninth Ward, near the place where the levee broke, a construction team was clearing debris. A Black woman in a vest and construction hat directed the men. “My name is Cassandra Andrews but they call me the Queen.” She told me about her flooded home. “It took a toll on me,” Andrews said. “When I rebuild the city I feel like I’m rebuilding myself.”

Volunteers from community groups like Common Ground have spent a year scraping houses clean so owners can claim them. I watched them haul rotten furniture out of devastated homes. Each day they returned sore from resurrecting life from the ruins. While driving, I saw a plastic skeleton on the fence, the kind used by doctors. I put it in my car trunk.

Later that night, I visited Curtis Muhammed, a civil rights activist who founded the People’s Organizing Committee, which guts destroyed homes for free. He follows the Ella Baker principle of obeying people’s demands. On Saturday the group held a Survivor Council meeting. Thirty residents fanned hot air around their faces as they sat in a circle. Muhammed sensed their exhaustion. “We take our orders from you,” he said, “If

you want us to clean your home, get you a trailer, tell us and it’s done.”

The people listened cautiously. “I know they mean well but it’s hard to believe any promises,” an older woman turned and said. “It’s been a year and I still ain’t got electricity.”

DEAD MAN WALKING

As the Ninth Ward darkened, we drove to the brightly lit French Quarter. I strolled along Bourbon Street with my friend. Loud clubs and strip joints blasted us with music and sex. Hundreds of tourists and college kids prowled the streets. Not survivors, but still people.

This disturbed one activist from a group of People’s Organizing Committee volunteers. “It’s awkward” a young female member said, “we are here to help the People and this is what they want but the misogyny is fucked,” she shook her shoulders. “It’s time to go.” They left in a huddle, protecting their purity. We stayed, bought beers and watched kids stumble around.

In the window of a strip joint named Bewitched a young woman spun on a pole. I asked if we could take her picture. “You a reporter?” she asked hopefully. In a few minutes she told me her life: the fight with her mom, dropping out of high school, the dream of being the next Keisha Cole.

“I’m a singer,” she said. “I strip to make money but I sing to survive.” She sang Sam Cooke’s anthem “A Change is Gonna Come.” I stood there surrounded by leering men and listened. She needed to sing. I heard in her voice the memory and music of the slaves who knew how sweet freedom is.

Maybe it was anger. Maybe I wanted to remind the tourists of the culture New Orleans was losing, one family, one demolished house at a time. I asked my friend to get the skeleton we found earlier. He came back with it and I grabbed it by the ankles and dragged it up and down Bourbon Street. “Hey is that your wife?” asked a few onlookers who assumed it was a joke. “No,” I said. “It’s the Ninth Ward.”

Some scowled and walked off but I kept dragging the skeleton. For the first time since my arrival the memory of the flood didn’t overwhelm me. I don’t know why but while hauling the skeleton through Bourbon Street, I was laughing from my belly and felt, after a year of drowning, the waters recede.



Lower Ninth Ward, February 2006 PHOTO: ERIN SIEGAL

BY JORDAN FLAHERTY

Driving through the Lower Ninth Ward on any given day, you are likely to see scattered groups on guided or unguided tours, tourist-filled buses and vans filled with church volunteers or scruffy activists on bikes. People come to see the levee — now rebuilt — and to view the general devastation, which is still very much present. In fact, until recently, bodies were still being discovered regularly, and few doubt that more remain buried amongst the rubble. Virtually no one from this large neighborhood has been able to return. Most of the area still has no electricity or running water.

“I want as many people to come visit here as possible,” a Lower Ninth Ward resident named Calvin told me as we walked past the infamous breached levees and destroyed homes of his neighborhood. “The national media has forgotten us, the politicians in DC have forgotten us. I support anything to get the word out.”

Among many people I’ve spoken with in New Orleans, this sentiment is common; the idea that the country has moved on, and if people would just come here and see for themselves,

they’ll bring attention and consciousness.

Beginning days after the storm, New Orleans hosted a stream of celebrities and political players, from Sean Penn to Spike Lee, a United Nations Human Rights envoy, and a series of PR visits from president Bush. Later, Women of the Storm, a nonpartisan group led mostly by wealthy white women from New Orleans, raised a lot of cash and publicity for their mission to fly to DC and convince congressional representatives to come here and view the devastation.

“It was frustrating and painful at first,” former mayoral candidate and Lower Ninth Ward resident Greta Gladney recalls, referring to the people that have come to walk the streets around her home. “Before December, in order to see our own neighborhood, we had to ride on a tour bus, while contractors, insurance adjusters, journalists and police and soldiers could walk around there as much as they wanted. Politicians were using our neighborhood for leverage, to get more money from the federal government. But they don’t want the Lower Nine to be rebuilt, so the money they get from our suffering is not going to come to us.”

Now, we are days away from the long-her-

>> HOW DO YOU
COMMEMORATE THE
ANNIVERSARY OF SOMETHING
THAT IS STILL HAPPENING? <<

alded anniversary of the destruction of our city, and once again the tour buses are filling up. To commemorate the anniversary, the Nagin administration announced a party — fireworks at the superdome, a masquerade, and a comedy show at the downtown casino were all initially a part of the official city festivities.

Although those plans were widely seen as offensive, and have since been cancelled, there is still, for many, an unsettled feeling around this anniversary. How do you commemorate the anniversary of something that is still happening?

The devastation of our city is not just something that happened a year ago, it’s something that is going on yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Half of the people of New Orleans remain dispersed around the U.S. Suicide rates have tripled. The National Guard is still patrolling the streets. Most schools and hospitals — especially those serving poor people — are still closed. Central issues related to the planning of the city — including what neighborhoods will be rebuilt, how they will be rebuilt, and who will make the decisions — remain unresolved. Perhaps most importantly, few people here feel protected by the levees that surround this city.

We in New Orleans know that our moment is ending. This anniversary will bring one last deluge of media attention, but after that — barring another catastrophe — the spotlight will move on. The corporate media will reassign their reporters. Liberal foundations will redirect their money to the next urgent priority. Activist volunteers will be going back to school or onto the next volunteer hub.

Grassroots organizers have organized alternate plans for the anniversary, including vigils, press conferences, a tour of condemned public housing, and a memorial and march — beginning in the Lower Nine — organized by a coalition called the United Front to Commemorate the Great Flood. Local groups continue to organize in the neighborhoods of the city, and in the diaspora. Whatever happens in these coming weeks and months, for the people of New Orleans, the struggle — and the mourning — continues, with or without the attention of the world.

Jordan Flaherty is a union organizer and editor of Left Turn Magazine. He can be reached at neworleans@leftturn.org. He is not planning on moving out of New Orleans.

Challenging A Source of Global Warming

IN THE WAKE OF KATRINA, ACTIVISTS CONFRONT POLLUTING POWER-PLANTS AND ADVOCATE LOW-ENERGY CONSUMPTION COMMUNITIES

BY JESSICA LEE

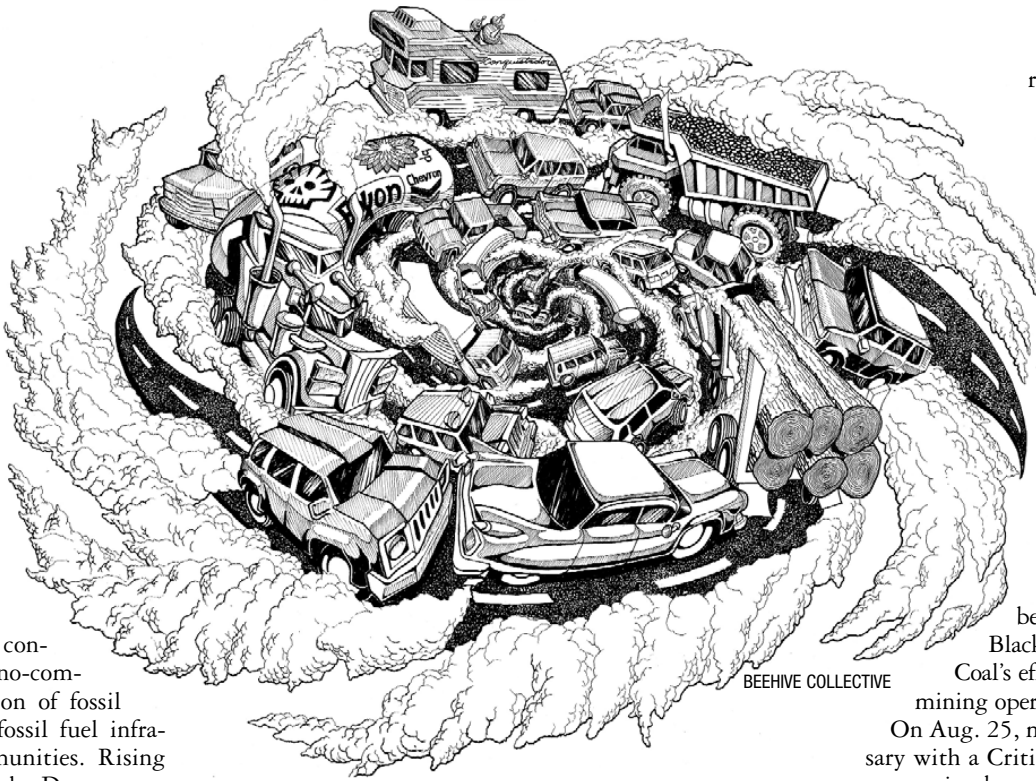
One year ago, New Orleans and the Gulf Coast residents were blasted by Hurricane Katrina, the costliest storm in U.S. history. For many, more shocking than the wind and flooding was the inadequate government emergency response and the possibility that global warming was a factor.

From the mucky waters of New Orleans, several groups emerged to provide aid to victims and make global warming a top priority. The volunteer-based Common Grounds Collective, whose motto is “solidarity not charity,” began offering assistance, mutual aid, and community support to Katrina victims days after the storm hit.

A second group, Rising Tide, promises to confront global warming at its source, using a no-compromise approach to stopping the extraction of fossil fuels and preventing construction of new fossil fuel infrastructure while building sustainable communities. Rising Tide North America formed a month after the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI declared “ecoterrorism” “the number one domestic terrorist threat” in January 2006.

More than 75 individuals with Rising Tide North America teamed up with Earth First! July 10 to occupy the bridge leading into the American Electric Power Clinch River coal-fired power plant near Carbo, Va., which releases 4.25 million pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

Despite international protests, on July 16 the Group of Eight (G8) industrial nations approved a Global Energy Security statement promoting nuclear energy. The eight



countries represent 15 percent of the world’s population, but produce 45 percent of total carbon dioxide emissions.

Rising Tide members will be among the tens of thousands demonstrating in Mexico City in October when the G8 negotiates a climate change agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

“Poor, indigenous and environmentally vulnerable communities should not bear the brunt of disease epidemics, droughts, floods, melting ice, rising oceans, hurricanes and other catastrophes caused by the global climate change that

rich countries are responsible for due to our prodigious burning of coal, oil and gas for energy,” said Ethan Green of Rising Tide North America.

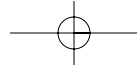
The Camp for Climate Action hopes to attract thousands to England’s Megawatt Valley on Aug. 26-Sept. 4 to learn about global warming and techniques for direct action against “climate criminals.” Participants plan to converge on the Drax power station Aug. 31 for a creative mass action to shut down the United Kingdom’s largest emitter of carbon monoxide.

Rising Tide has joined forces with environmental justice groups combating pollution from refineries, power plants and coal-processing facilities. Last spring, members sent supplies to the Dine (Navajo) People of Black Mesa, Ariz., who have been resisting Peabody Coal’s efforts to forcibly relocate people and expand its mining operations, explained organizer Storm Waters.

On Aug. 25, more than 30 cities marked Katrina’s anniversary with a Critical Mass bike ride, “specifically drawing the connection between the oil industry and the historical role it played in setting the stage for Katrina,” said Maine organizer Emily Hornback.

“Unlike Rising Tide, most other organizations who say they work for climate protection merely promote technological reforms to the capitalist economy, and shy away from demanding deep changes that address the common causes of war, social and economic injustice and ecological destruction,” said Philadelphia-based activist Ethan Genauier.

For more information, see www.risingtidenorthamerica.org and www.climatecamp.org.uk.



THE MIDDLE EAST

LEBANON REBUILDS (again)

BY ANA NOGUEIRA AND SASEEN KAWZALLY
PHOTOS BY ANDREW STERN/REDUX

BEIRUT, Lebanon—All 20 members of Ali Hussein's family thought they were safe. They had escaped the constant bombing in South Lebanon and found refuge in the Beirut suburb of Shiyah. It was far enough away from the heavily bombarded neighborhood of Dahiye to offer them a sense of security.

All that changed on the night of Aug. 8. At 8 p.m. Israel bombed the residential building in which the Hussein family was staying, resulting in the single deadliest attack of the 34-day war.



At least 41 people were killed. Ali, his wife and a 9-year-old son survived only because the balcony they were sitting on was blown off the building and thrown across the street when the missile hit. His wife's back is broken and his son is burned badly.

When Ali found out his mother died he cried. When he discovered 16 other members of his family died he fainted.

Speaking to him in his hospital room, Ali said he didn't have the courage to tell his wife and son the news. Instead he lied and told them they were safe in another hospital.

As some sense of normalcy returns to Lebanon's streets and the news media move on to other events, one can only think of Ali. The war may be over, for now, but the effects of it are long-lasting and profound.

A SHATTERED NATION

Dahiye, the southern suburb of Beirut hardest hit by Israel, looks like the aftermath of Sept. 11, about a hundred times over. Almost 200 buildings were completely demolished in this residential neighborhood during the war. Another 200 were badly damaged. The smell, the cement-filled air, is an instant throwback to that day in New York City.

The U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon estimates that Israel dropped 5,000 bombs per day on the country or 170,000 bombs in all.

Nine hundred factories, 600 small businesses and at least 15,000 homes are gone. The country's two main power plants look like twisted junkyards. The oil spilled from these destroyed facilities has spread 75 miles up the coast, turning Lebanon's tourist beaches into blackened wastelands. It will cost an estimated \$180 million to rebuild the electricity grid; the water treatment and delivery system requires another \$70 million.

"I have never seen destruction like this," said water and sanitation specialist Branislav Jekic in a UNICEF statement. "People want to move back to their communities. But whether they stay or not will depend on the availability of water."

Two weeks into the ceasefire Israel is maintaining its air and sea blockade. Beirut still doesn't have 24-hour power.

In every village in the South a top priority is campaigns to inform people on how to avoid the estimated 300,000 unexploded cluster bombs. One woman in the town of Yahmour, which is rife with the live bomblets, lost her leg as she swept away debris in her kitchen. At the time of this report, 39 people have been injured and 12 killed by these devices since the ceasefire was established. The toll rises daily; many of the casualties are children playing in the rubble.

Tobacco and banana fields, primary sources of income for families in the south, are also littered

with bomblets. De-mining groups say it will take over two years to make farm lands safe. But many families can't wait that long and are already risking their lives to put food on the table.

Israel hoped that by bombing the infrastructure of Lebanon, the Bush administration's neoliberal showcase in the Middle East, the Lebanese would blame Hezbollah and its leader Hassan Nasrallah for the devastation. The Israeli Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, told the *New York Times* on July 15 that the airstrikes were intended to deliver "a clear message to both greater Beirut and Lebanon that they've swallowed a cancer and have to vomit it up, because if they don't their country will pay a very high price."

Instead, support for Hezbollah soared to 87 percent and crossed all religious lines, according to a poll conducted on July 26 by the Beirut Center for Research and Information. Many seemed to agree with Water and Energy Minister Mohammed Fneish, one of Hezbollah's two cabinet officials, who said, "If joining the government's parliament is a national duty, then so is defending the country."

"Hassan Nasrallah is the only one acting like a true leader right now," said Nancy, a Christian living in the northern city of Tripoli.

HEZBOLLAH: FASTER THAN FEMA

Indeed, Hezbollah is winning even more support with its quick response to the urgent needs of people. Hezbollah has offered furniture and up to \$12,000 in cash for one year's rent to any family made homeless by the war. That is six times the dollar amount that survivors of Hurricane Katrina received from FEMA. They are even helping families through the difficult process of finding available apartments.

"I lost my home," Hassan Bashir, father of four, told *The Independent* minutes after he received \$12,000 at a makeshift Hezbollah compensation center. "The government has done nothing. If I had to lose my home again for a victory against Israel, I would do it."

The Lebanese government has a compensation plan also, but it is only for families who lost a loved one. So far, there is no government plan to help the country recover.

Meanwhile, in Dahiye, bulldozers and teams of volunteers coordinated by Hezbollah's "Construction Jihad" (which includes participation from the Christian Free Patriotic Movement Party) are busy clearing roads of debris and removing dangling chunks of concrete from partially destroyed buildings. One demolition crew we talked to said they were not contracted by anyone. They have an agreement with Hezbollah to clear the rubble from a destroyed bridge in exchange for any scrap metal they can recover.

The sophistication of the rebuilding effort is remarkable. Hezbollah divided the suburb into a grid. Each square in the grid is represented by a team of building coordinators who pool resources. Each building has one coordinator and a team of volunteers, most of whom are residents. This ensures that the aid is both efficient and tailored to the needs of each family in the area.

Many wonder where the government is and say it is being sectarian by not taking an active role in the rebuilding efforts.

"We are represented in the government," Dr. Ahmad Malli, a member of Hezbollah's Political Council said. "I don't want to make apologies for the government but we have to be objective. There are no existing governmental institutions that are ready to face this kind of destruction. Yet, we have an ethical responsibility towards our people, and we can't accept that so many are homeless. That is why [Construction Jihad] took the initiative."

The Bush administration has offered \$230 million in reconstruction aid and assistance (including military), but it also stands ready to prosecute any American who assists in Hezbollah's efforts as it is labeled a "foreign terrorist organization" by the U.S. State Department.

To Hezbollah, the U.S. aid offer is part of "the same story of profiteering" from both war and peace. Abbas Yasine, a coordinator of the Hezbollah compensation committee in Dahiye told us, "On the one hand they sell the bombs, and on the other they want the contracts that will repair the damage. We don't want any help from the American government. We will only accept popular help from [individual] Americans."



People dig through a pile of rubble looking for personal possessions in Dahiye, a southern suburb of Beirut. A total of 198 buildings were destroyed by almost-daily Israeli bombing raids during the 34-day war.

OPINION

bility, as the Atlantic Alliance fragmented and new power centers and regional blocs took shape. It's also marked by state-sponsored barbarism that has swept away any pretense of international law, the accelerating shift of power from West to East, wars fought and governments toppled for access to energy reserves, and the triumph of neoliberal economics.

HAVES VS. HAVE-NOTS

Approaching the fifth anniversary of Sept. 11, what began as a war against political Islam has become a wider war of the haves against the have-nots. The war on terror has become a convenient excuse for Israel, India and Russia to justify their mayhem in the Middle East, Kashmir and Chechnya. All three play the victim, using the inevitable backlash from bloody occupations as justification for yet more repression.

There is a host of camp followers: Japan's nationalists, eager to exploit North Korea's missiles as an excuse to re-militarize; Egypt's nepotistic regime warring against its own people; Colombia's strongman Uribe waging a dirty war for the benefit of oil companies and narco-trafficking paramilitaries; thuggish, U.S.-aligned regimes from El Salvador to the Philippines. Even France, darling of left-leaning Europhiles, has joined in, threatening nuclear strikes against "terrorists."

Afghanistan was supposed to show the new U.S. approach, how it would rebuild the country to lift the yoke of extremism. But as in Iraq, blinded by a free-market ideology, the U.S. reconstruction effort has failed. What's left is an impotent government dependent on warlords, a resurgent Taliban that controls much of the country, and a populace bitter at unfulfilled promises of security and development.

However desperate the situation is in Afghanistan, with Western troops being bled by guerrilla warfare, Pakistan may be in worse shape. Ruled by a dictator, Pakistan has abandoned its populace. Corruption and military spending consume the budget, leaving almost nothing for health, education and social welfare. Gen. Pervez Musharraf is considered an ally, perhaps because he's allowed the country to be flooded by FBI agents, offers no protest when hundreds of its citizens are disappeared and has launched his own war in the border regions.

But that war, or wars rather, is going poorly. Northwest Pakistan is convulsed by a low-intensity conflict between U.S.-equipped Pakistani troops and militant Islamists, many of them backers of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Now, Musharraf has inflamed inhabitants of Baluchistan by killing a venerated leader. The conflict there mirrors many others the world over — a poor people who gain nothing from extensive oil and gas reserves that are developed for the benefit of ruling elites and global energy hogs. Add a nuclear arsenal into the mix and Pakistan is one of the world's most dangerous powder kegs.

POWER SHIFTS

Even as the U.S. Empire declines, neoliberalism still holds the center. The China-Wal-Mart model dominates the economy: rock-bottom wages, workers with no rights and monopoly capital clear-cutting everything in its path. China is the obvious beneficiary from the global chaos as manufacturing facilities and dollars flow its way. It's biding its time, however, knowing that it is decades behind the United States economically and militarily.

Not all is bleak. South America is breaking the Washington consensus on free trade that demands the global South prioritize loan payments over social welfare. Venezuela is the most visible opponent of U.S. elites and has dabbled somewhat successfully with grassroots development and regional trading alliances.

The war on terror has revealed an atrophied U.S. political system. With little opposition from the Democratic Party, the media, business elites or the public, the Bush administration has assumed unprecedented powers. The notion of the "unitary executive" — that all law-making power inheres in Bush — is a modern-day version of the divine right of kings. Whatever judicial or legislative restraint is put on the presidency has been summarily rejected in hundreds of instances so far.

After Sept. 11, some scholars pointed out that the American Empire was in decline. The choice, it was suggested, was between a controlled descent and a crash-and-burn landing. The Bush administration has chosen the later. Even as a wounded giant, the United States can wreak havoc for decades to come.

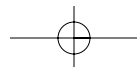
The most pressing issues of the coming decades are not ones of fighting terrorism, which is but a cover for authoritarian rule and transferring wealth to the rich, but the environment, global warming, sustainability and the redistribution of resources. The choice is between a Hobbesian world — "A war of all against all" — over precious resources or a global solidarity of fulfilling needs versus consumption. It's not very American, but it's the best option we have.



ABOVE: Ali Hussein (R) lies wounded in the Mount Lebanon Hospital in Chiah while his Aunt Narian (L) cries at his bedside. Ali lost 17 members of his family in an Israeli air attack, including his mother, uncle, his uncle's wife, their 5 children, his 6 siblings, and three of his children.

NEAR RIGHT: A Lebanese rescue worker holds up the charred remains of a bombing victim as they dig through rubble for bodies.

FAR RIGHT: Lebanese rescue workers move through the crowd with a stretcher to collect the remains of bomb victims.





King Leopold's Ghost is a newly-released documentary based on the bestseller by American journalist Adam Hochschild. It depicts how Belgian King Leopold II made the huge and resource-rich central African Congo his own private reserve, and how his legacy of exploiting the land and brutalizing its people continues in modern times. The film traces the living legacy of colonialism in the Congo, including the 1961 assassination of independence leader Patrice Lumumba and the subsequent years of brutal dictatorship under Mobutu Sese Seko (including a video clip of George Bush Sr. introducing Mobutu as “one of our most valued friends”), while linking the country’s recent civil wars to continuing economic exploitation.

—VH

Rape as a weapon

Rape has become a defining characteristic of the war in the DRC, as has the mutilation of victims. In the Congo, rape is a cheaper weapon of war than bullets; some 60 percent of all combatants in the DRC are HIV+, leaving countless women and girls infected and traumatized. The rapes are often so violent that they leave the women not only traumatized and stigmatized by society, but often also unable to bear children. In effect, an entire generation is lost, while the other is left battered. In a March 8, 2004 article from *The Nation*, Trevor Lowe, spokesperson for the UN World Food Program, said that “the nature of sexual violence in the DRC conflict is grotesque, completely abnormal. Babies, children, women – nobody is being spared. For every woman speaking out, there are hundreds who’ve not yet emerged from the hell. Rape is so stigmatized in the DRC, and people are afraid of reprisals from rebels. It’s a complete and utter breakdown of norms. Like Rwanda, only worse.” His colleague Christiane Berthiaume added, “Never before have we found as many victims of rape in conflict situations as we are discovering in the DRC.”

—VH



FRANK REYNOSO

Congo Poised Between War and Peace

RUN-OFF ELECTION COULD SPARK NEW CIVIL WAR

BY VANESSA HRADSKY

Oct. 29 will be an important day in the history of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The run-off election between President Joseph Kabila and former rebel leader Jean-Pierre Bemba will be the nation’s first contested presidential vote since 1960. The first round occurred on July 30, leaving Kabila shy of the 50 percent mark needed for a win. He garnered 45 percent to Bemba’s second-place finish of 20 percent.

After the first-round results were announced, however, fighting broke out in the capital of Kinshasa between the forces of Kabila and Bemba on Aug. 20, leaving at least 23 dead. The clashes raised fears that whoever wins, war could return at any time given the fragility of the political situation and the multitude of parties involved.

Some 17,000 U.N. peacekeeping troops are on hand, but the DRC remains deeply divided. Kabila drew his support from Eastern sections of the country but could only muster 13 percent of the vote in Kinshasa, which went for Bemba by more than 60 percent.

It’s easy to see why Congo’s citizens are eager for peace. They have lived through incessant violence from the time King Leopold II of Belgium began his rule in the mid-1880s. Since the beginning of the Second Congo War in 1998, the death toll has passed 4 million, the highest of any conflict since World War II. And although the war officially ended in 2003, aid agencies say that war-related hunger and disease continue to kill over 1,200 people a day.

Many Congolese hope for a long-awaited peace, but wonder what real changes will take place as both Kabila and Bemba have records of serious human rights violations.

WAR CRIMES

Kabila is accused of ignoring the crimes committed by his security forces against civilians. A May 2006 report by the U.N. Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) states that “the routine use of physical violence against civilians by members of the security forces was reported wherever army and police were deployed. Threats, beatings and arrests were usually motivated by attempts to obtain money, goods, livestock or mined products from civilians. High numbers of rapes and other incidents of sexual violence against women and girls continued to be reported throughout the DRC, the main perpetrators being the army and police officers.”

Bemba, one of four vice-presidents in the current transitional DRC government, is the leader of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC), a rebel group turned political party, which was backed by the government of Uganda during the war. According to MONUC, evidence reveals “systematic looting and rape” as well as summary executions and abductions by soldiers of the MLC and the Congolese Rally for Democracy/National during their occupation of Mambasa territory in the northeastern part of the country in 2002.

The roots of conflict run deep in the Congo. Colonialism, the 32-year dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko, the country’s mix of poverty, vast natural resources and lure of profits and long-standing tribal and ethnic tensions are all culprits.

RWANDA REDUX

The last two wars stemmed from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, when the Interahamwe – the Hutu militias responsible for killing up to one million Tutsis in Rwanda – fled across

the border to the DRC. Rwanda’s government, worried that the Interahamwe would mount an offensive from across the border started sending forces into DRC territory and arming the local Tutsi population there, the Banyamulenge.

The First Congo War erupted in 1996 when the Banyamulenge, who were told to leave the DRC or be killed, rebelled against Mobutu’s forces, backed by Rwanda and Uganda-backed rebels, led by Laurent Kabila. In 1997, they eventually toppled Mobutu, who seized power in 1965 with backing from the CIA and Belgium.

But Laurent Kabila grew wary of the Rwandan presence in the DRC and forced them to leave, backed by troops from Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The United Nations, meanwhile, accused Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe of using their forces in the DRC as a cover to pillage its huge mineral wealth.

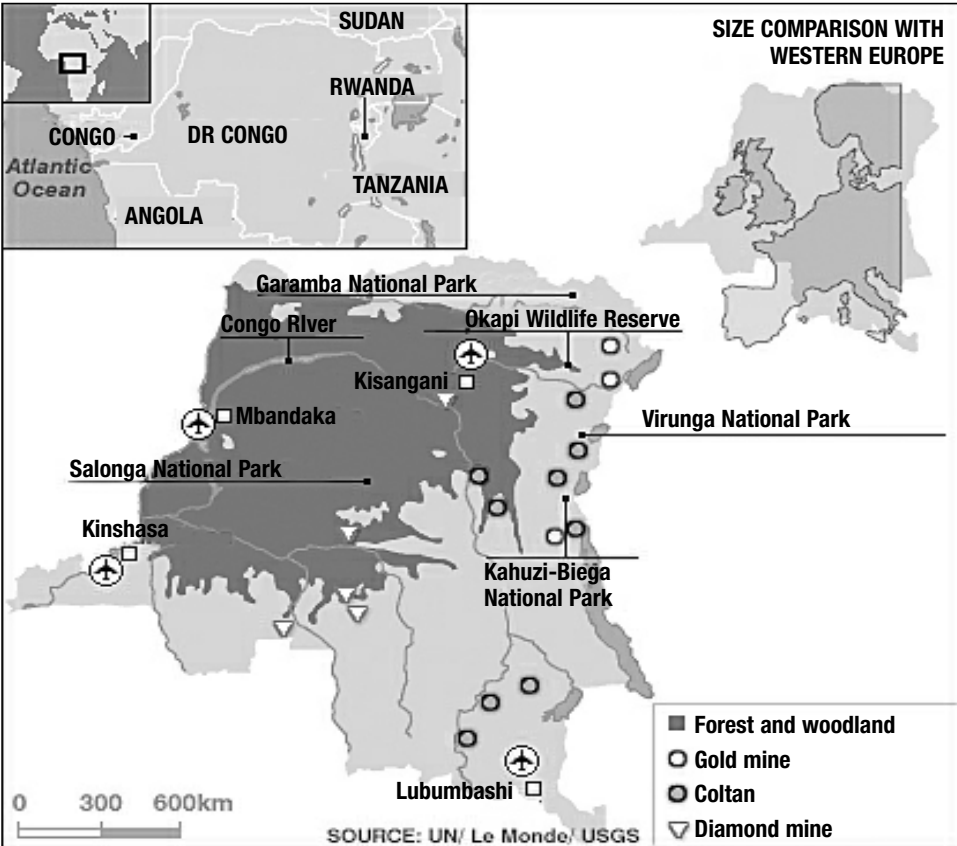
The DRC’s second war started in 1998 between the Congolese army and shifting alliances of rebel militias. The two main rebel groups were the Rally for Congolese

There is a worldwide system to verify diamonds – the Kimberley process – but it doesn’t require buyers to verify anybody’s age.

Kabila rewarded his military allies with stakes in Congo’s mining sector. Zimbabwe received shares in copper and cobalt mines and Namibia in diamonds. Angola’s national oil company, Sonangol, was allowed to create a subsidiary, Sonangol-Congo, which has a major role in production and distribution of oil in the DRC.

CELL PHONES AND PLAY STATIONS

The West also has a vested interest in the DRC. Coltan is used in cell phones, playstations and other electronics, while cobalt is essential for the nuclear, chemical, aerospace and defense industries. In 1997, Laurent Kabila signed a \$1 billion contract with American Mineral Fields International (now called Adastral Mining), to control copper, cobalt and zinc mines and processing plants. The main gold exploration ventures in the DRC include Canadian company Banro, U.S.-based Anglo-American, Swedish Metalor, and



NEWS.BBC.CO.UK

Democracy, backed by Rwanda, and the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, supported by Uganda. It’s often been referred to as the “Great War of Africa” with warring factions participating from nine states: the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Angola, Zimbabwe, Chad, Sudan, Namibia and Libya.

In 2001, Laurent Kabila was assassinated and his son Joseph Kabila was voted in as his replacement by Parliament. In 2002, Kabila signed a peace deal, which set him up as interim president and gave both rebel groups seven ministries in the interim government.

Behind the ethnic and tribal tensions is a story of greed. The DRC is rich in natural resources like diamonds, gold, crude oil, copper, cobalt and coltan yet the per capita income is only U.S. \$120.

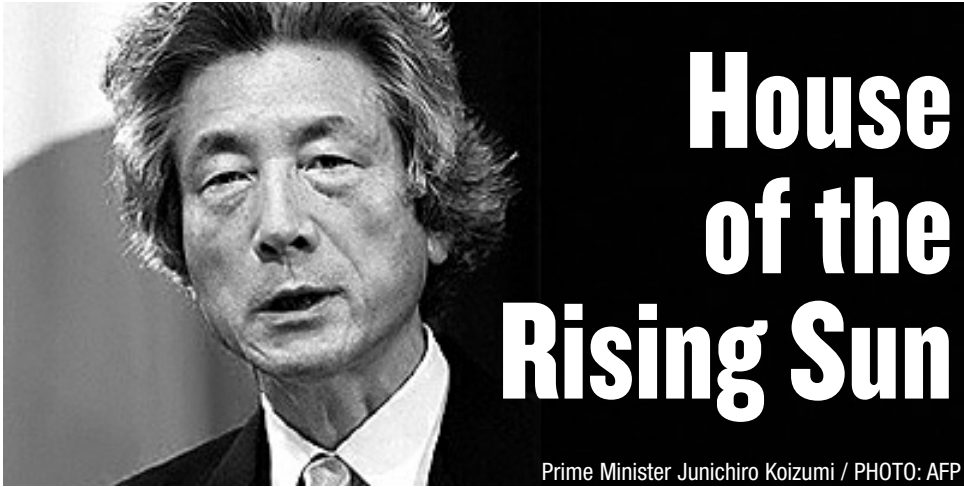
The country’s diamond industry is rife with exploitation. It generates more than \$700 million a year in the DRC, and millions more for resellers, but diamond miners earn less than a dollar a day. Most of these miners are children between 10 and 16 years of age.

the number one and two gold producers in the world, South Africa’s Anglo-Ashanti Gold and Barrick Gold of Canada.

The ongoing fighting has fueled official corruption, making it easier for corporate interests to take advantage of the situation. According to human rights watchdog Global Witness illegal exports of minerals abound across the DRC-Zambia border, with government and security officials either turning a blind eye to false or inaccurate export certificates, or actively colluding with trading companies to circumvent control procedures.

In a country of such need, one can easily understand why such riches would create corruption and conflict. It’s no surprise that the last two wars erupted in the northeast DRC – it’s where most of its gold and many other mineral resources are located. The most volatile province is still North Kivu, which borders Uganda and Rwanda.

Oct. 29 will be the test if the hopes of millions for peace are fulfilled or if the DRC plunges into around round of war.



Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi / PHOTO: AFP

BY JOHN CHAN

In one of his final acts before leaving office in September, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi paid a sixth visit to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine where Japan's war dead, including convicted war criminals, are worshiped. Particularly significant was the date of Koizumi's visit – Aug. 15 was the day on which Japan formally surrendered to U.S. forces in 1945.

Koizumi's determination to visit the Shinto religious shrine on that date, despite repeated protests by China and South Korea, was designed to send a message: Japan is no longer prepared to be restrained by its defeat in World War II nor apologetic for the terrible crimes committed by Japanese imperialism in the 1930s and 1940s.

More than any of his postwar predecessors, Koizumi is responsible for reviving the country's militarist traditions and aggressively reasserting Japan's interests in Northeast Asia.

The Yasukuni Shrine has long been a symbol of Japanese nationalism and militarism. Its associated history museum portrays Japan's wartime conquests as "liberating" Asia from Western powers and whitewashes Japanese military atrocities. "Japan's dream of building a Great East Asia was necessitated by history and it was sought after by the countries of Asia," the shrine declares on its website.

Every aspect of Koizumi's visit was contrived to blunt criticism, while encouraging right-wing nationalists. He claimed to be making the trip as an individual, yet signed the guest book as "Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi." Unlike previous years, he prayed in the main building, thus more formally paying homage to the war dead.

"LONG LIVE THE EMPEROR!"

The message was not lost on the hundreds of right-wing activists who gather annually at the shrine on Aug. 15. Among them was Yuko Tojo – the granddaughter of wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo – who was tried and executed as a war criminal by a U.S.-led tribunal in 1948. "I thank Prime Minister Koizumi from the bottom of my heart for today's visit, since he put away other countries' interference in domestic affairs," she declared.

Others were dressed in wartime military uniforms bearing the imperial Chrysanthemum badge. They shouted "Long live the Emperor!", waved the wartime flag and sang the national anthem as nearby sound trucks blared out military marches. Another 56 Japanese MPs visited the shrine later in the day.

The visit did not go unopposed – a reflection of the deep-seated hostility in Japan to militarism. A busload of protesters attempted to enter the shrine's grounds but they were barred by police. A group of 300 protesters gathered in Tokyo's Sakamotocho Park. Another 300 assembled near the shrine. Professor Koichi Yokota, a speaker at the protest, accused Koizumi of violating the constitution's separation of the state and religion.

Koizumi's visit provoked strong opposition in the region. A Chinese spokesperson declared that it "challenges international justice and tramples on the conscience of mankind". South Korea said the Yasukuni visit "strained South Korea-Japan relations" and damaged cooperative ties in Northeast Asia. Taiwan called on Tokyo to "face the past

squarely." Even Russia warned that the visit and Japan's wartime history were "extremely delicate subjects."

While many people legitimately fear a revival of Japanese militarism, Beijing and Seoul are exploiting these sentiments to divert from social tensions at home. Last year the Chinese government encouraged anti-Japanese protests by layers of middle-class youth, leading to racist attacks on innocent Japanese visitors.

MILITARIST AGENDA

Sections of the Japanese ruling class have been pressing for a more aggressive assertion of economic and strategic interests since the early 1990s. But the country's armed forces were constrained by the so-called pacifist clause in the post-war constitution that effectively blocked the development of an offensive military capacity and the deployment of Japanese troops overseas. The limitations became embarrassingly apparent during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War – Tokyo was unable to contribute troops to the U.S.-led force but was forced to pay a large portion of the costs.

The Bush administration's "war on terrorism" has been a political boon to Koizumi. Following Sept. 11, Koizumi strengthened Japan's alliance with Washington, calculating that it would enable his government to undermine the constitutional restraints on the Japanese military.

In 2001 Koizumi established a precedent by sending Japanese warships to the Indian Ocean to support the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. In 2003 Koizumi defied popular opposition to send troops to support the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq – the first time that Japanese soldiers have been deployed to a foreign combat zone since 1945. Following missile tests by North Korea in July, Japan, rather than the United States, took the lead in pressing for a punitive resolution in the U.N. Security Council. Inside Japan, senior government figures argued that Japan had to have offensive military capabilities for a "pre-emptive" strike against North Korea.

Encouraged by the Bush administration to take a more aggressive role in Northeast Asia, particularly against China, the Koizumi government has provoked a series of territorial disputes, not only with Beijing, but also with Russia, South Korea and Taiwan. Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni shrine and his government's approval of controversial history texts whitewashing Japan's wartime role have only compounded regional tensions.

The frontrunner as the next prime minister is Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, a right-wing nationalist who openly defended the shrine visit and who has been a frequent visitor to the Yasukuni shrine.

The debate over the shrine visits also reflects concerns about popular opposition. An editorial in Asahi Shimbun on Aug. 17 warned that the visit was a serious "political mistake" that deeply divided the nation. "Is he totally unaware of the growing domestic opposition to his Yasukuni visits?" the daily newspaper exclaimed.

Despite this opposition, it is likely that Abe will succeed Koizumi and continue the aggressive assertion of Japanese imperialism's interests in the region and internationally.

Excerpted from the World Socialist Web Site, wsws.org.



MEXICO ELECTION RECOUNT: a "true coup d'etat"

Calling the Aug. 29 ruling by Mexico's top electoral tribunal rejecting any significant fraud in the July 2 presidential election a "true coup d'etat," leftist Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador has called for increased civil disobedience. Tens of thousands of López Obrador's supporters have been camped out for weeks in Mexico City's zocalo (center plaza) and along major thoroughfares to protest alleged voter fraud, and millions have mobilized in other cities to demand a full recount.

The tribunal rejected a full recount. A partial recount was conducted in 11,839 precincts or about nine percent of Mexico's 130,000 precincts, and found "irregularities" but said both candidates lost votes. According to *Narco News*, the partial recount found 45,890 votes above the number of voters in a total of 3,074 precincts and 80,392 ballots of citizens who did vote are missing in 4,368 precincts. If these trends continue in the remaining precincts it would mean that more than 1.5 million votes were either stolen or stuffed – rightist National Action Party (PAN) candidate Felipe Calderon leads by only 243,000 votes. The tribunal must declare a winner or annul the election by Sept. 6.

—BENNETT BAUMER

OAXACA UPRISING INTENSIFIES

Meanwhile, in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, an annual teacher's strike has turned into a massive uprising as more and more splinter groups join the protesters, demanding Gov. Ulises Ruiz Ortiz resignation, better working conditions and an end to free-for-all capitalism.

- APRIL 29** Oaxaca teachers begin a strike demanding improved conditions in schools. The teachers' strike, which occurs every spring, usually last a few weeks and ends with a slightly better contract
- MAY 22** At least 70,000 teachers and supporters establish a peaceful protest encampment in the main square of Oaxaca de Juarez, the state's capitol.
- JUNE 14** Gov. Ruiz Ortiz launches a crackdown on the strike. Riot police descend on the protesters with tear gas, smoke grenades, stun grenades and firearms. They forcibly remove some of the protesters.
- JUNE 15** The teachers reoccupy the square, joined by thousands of students and leftists who refuse to leave.
- JULY 5** The Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO), a broad coalition of dozens of unions, indigenous groups and aid organizations declares itself the governing body of Oaxaca. They begin a series of mega-marches, involving up to 500,000 people, no longer demanding wages but the removal of Gov. Ruiz Ortiz from office.
- AUGUST 1** Indigenous women from APPO take over Channel 9, Oaxaca's state TV and radio station, broadcasting previously unaired footage of police brutality during the June 14 attack.
- AUGUST 7** Indian Organizations for Human Rights in Oaxaca call for a Red Alert, seeking reinforcements for blockades of government buildings. During the week of Aug. 14, approximately four members of the APPO are fatally shot by police. Arrest warrants are issued for over 50 activists.
- AUGUST 21** The encampment at Channel 9 is attacked, rendering the antenna unusable in the ensuing damage. Moments later, APPO takes over at least ten commercial radio stations.
- AUGUST 29** Stores and businesses in the state capitol strike to demand an end to violence and blockades.

As we go to press, a mega-march is scheduled for Sept. 1, starting in the community of San Felipe and ending in the center of Oaxaca de Juarez.

For more, see narconews.com

—IRINA IVANOVA

FILM
All Guts,
No Glory

FRATRICIDE (2005)
DIR. YILMAZ ARSLAN

The last movie I walked out on was Roger Avary’s insipid *Killing Zoe* in 1994. I’ve seen hundreds of movies over the ensuing 12 years, including many I should have bailed on but didn’t in order to give my \$10.75 the benefit of the doubt. When I do get the rare urge to walk out, I think to myself, well, I stayed through *Armageddon*, so in all fairness I can’t leave this film either.

So it’s rather odd that I’m feeling absolutely no guilt about walking out on *Fratricide*, a film about Kurdish and Turkish immigrants in Germany so hollow it insults both its subject and its audience. Focusing on teenage Azad and pre-teen Ibo, recent arrivals struggling to survive by turning a bar bathroom into a makeshift barbershop for other immigrants, the film is structured around groups of brothers (note the hammerhead subtlety of the title) who are consumed by violence and German hip-hop culture in equal measure. When Azad’s pimp brother kills a Turkish thug, senseless revenge drives the plot into all-too-familiar grooves that completely undermine anything new the film might have said.

There’s a good story to tell here about the shared frustrations, renewed tensions and moral quandaries of transplanted Turks and Kurds, but director Yilmaz Arslan (the Kurdish Todd Solondz) finds the most conventional and shallow way to tell it. The clichés pile up so fast it’s practically an immigrant film parody: dead parents, wise but exploited children, listless non-actors, the plaintive score, a corrupt new land, etc.

By my estimate, the film had about 15 minutes left when I escaped, but those were 15 minutes of my life I could not spare. My exit came on strike three: my first urge to leave occurred during an early sequence in which a Turkish thug’s exposed entrails were consumed by his pit bull, the second when one of the two young protagonists was raped by said thug’s brother. I finally walked when the pit bull enjoyed another helping of entrails. Don’t think I’m a prude: I appreciate gore when it’s used well, and if I never welcome seeing child rape, I do think such scenes can be effectively used to depict true human depravity. What’s offensive is that these scenes are intended to reflect the horrible experiences of immigrants in a morally bankrupt, exceedingly capitalistic modern Europe, but play with all the impact of a teen gross-out comedy. This combination of pretentiousness with gratuitousness is toxic and reflects the tonally insensitive approach of the whole film.



A good drummer is regularly cited as the heartbeat of a healthy jazz band. Without the heart’s steady rhythm, an ensemble would be nothing but fragmented pieces of a crestfallen whole. The heartbeat melds melodic layers in the music whether it is the sheer fury of cracked trumpets, the shrill lyricism of a devastated vocalist, or bass lines that sound like a bird in flight.

It’s simply not enough to be well meaning. There are lots of other films, some tackling similar issues, that could have landed this film’s distribution deal. Though highly doubtful, it’s possible that in the remaining 15 minutes, *Fratricide* turned itself around via a shatteringly powerful climax. I for one will never find out, and neither should you.

Fratricide is showing at the Film Forum through Sept. 5.

—CHARLIE BASS

BOOKS
Guy Debord
Laid Bare

GUY DEBORD:
REVOLUTION IN THE
SERVICE OF POETRY (2006)
BY VINCENT KAUFMANN
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS

Revolutionary, romantic, heretic, theorist, vagabond, what was Guy Debord? Vincent Kaufmann’s new biography *Guy Debord: Revolution in the Service of Poetry*, translated by Robert Bonnono, demonstrates

MUSIC
Synching With the Body’s Beat

At the turn of his 65th birthday on Aug. 20, Milford Graves is studying music in a far-reaching field: how it can be therapy for a healing heart. The research Graves conducts in his Queens basement is significant to the analysis of musical performance. Graves studies pulsology, Unani techniques of pulse reading and holistic music therapy to elevate his constantly evolving music.

Graves is a percussionist who has been the free-form backbone, the energetic anchor of the avant-garde, the rising undercurrent of unedited, unrelenting jazz since the 1960s. He and other drummers such as Andrew Cyrille and Rashied Ali avoided the drummer’s conventional role as a timekeeper; instead, they took it to experimental levels where meter was no longer the basis. Along the way, he played with Albert Ayler, the New York Art Quartet, Paul Bley, Don Pullen, Giuseppi Logan, Hugh Masekela, Sonny Sharrock, saxophonist John Zorn, Bill Dixon and poet Amiri Baraka.

Graves is a chameleon drummer, often morphing his personality and voice to fit his instrument of choice. He is well-versed in the fine art of the conga and the tabla, the small Indian raga drum where individual finger sequences produce different tonal properties. His drumming has always dealt with music and healing as a part of tradition, as it is in various African cultures.

Today, Graves links a lifetime of drum work to innovative research on abnormal heartbeats and music. He is a tenured professor at Bennington College in Vermont and head of the nonprofit International Center for Medicinal and Scientific Research and has done extensive work on holistic healing.

The premise of his research is simple. Graves attempts to demonstrate a correlation between internal music structure and how our body’s cir-

culatory system functions. A healthy heart will have a shuffle-like rhythm, two paired beats over a 1-2-3 pattern. If the heartbeat is wrong, the pulse is off. The sound is a malignant, lurching beat. The flow is uncooperative and disruptive.

Stiff heartbeats are what Graves constructs into an operating table for manipulating sound. He uses a physiograph, a piece of medical equipment that measures heart rate, respirations, skin response and blood pressure, to observe how participants respond after he performs various music.

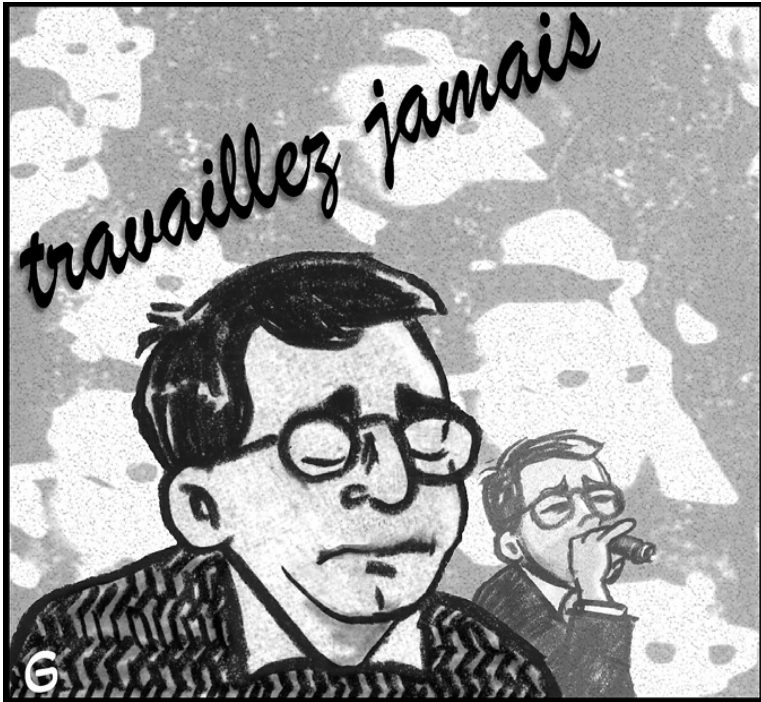
Participants often display standard responses. Sudden explosive sounds cause strong galvanic stress on the body’s system. “Free jazz,” or spontaneous, improvised music, intensely affects patients.

In one experiment, involving a patient with non-organic arrhythmia, or cardiac irregularities that are unresponsive to medication or lifestyle change, the man’s heart rhythm synchronized with the free jazz performed on the tape. Once the music was steadied into a regular heartbeat rhythm, the patient’s heart also aligned to a stable beat.

A computer allows Graves to speed up or slow down the sound toward or away from a normal heartbeat. He then feeds his finished sound product through a participant’s ears or through acupuncture needles. The result that emerges from these experiments are feelings of expectant delight and absolute disbelief, the same way audiences feel after hearing the spirited, fundamental tone that Milford Graves projects as a soloist. One feels entirely different – as if physically or psychologically in flux or in limbo.

The collective harmonics allow Graves’ live performances to fall into place, giving a sample of the greater imagination of this avant-garde percussionist.

—KAREN FU



were intended to create situations where life could be experienced authentically, without mediation.

Kaufmann points out that these techniques were hardly original and in fact borrowed from previous avant-gardes, but for the Situationists this was of little matter. The tactics had been “detourned” and in the hands of the right practitioners they were revolutionary. In Debord’s hands, they were an art of living and a steadfast way to refuse being co-opted.

Unsurprisingly, the task was easily misunderstood. The Situationist International had to remain small. Even today some of Debord’s barbs hurled at more “mature” leftists crack off the page. On Sartre: “It’s not enough to reject the Nobel Prize, you have to not deserve it in the first place.”

But the book is not a laundry list of leftist squabbles or a recital of the Situationists’ mythologies.

continued on next page

FILM

Little Birds: A Devastating Window on the War

At a time when the U.S.-led war in Iraq continues to be a defining issue in U.S. cultural, it is ironic that the most powerful and uncompromising documentary on the subject remains almost entirely unknown and unseen in this country.

It took Japanese filmmaker Takeharu Watai a year and a half to film more than 120 hours of footage in Iraq, which he managed to edit down to just two. The result is the stunning *Little Birds*, which plunges the viewer into the middle of the war, in all its sorrow and horror, and never lets up.

The film opens on the streets of Baghdad, just days before the war. Life appears ordinary, but this is belied by an underlying tension as Iraqis express their thoughts on the impending assault. It is not long before bombs and missiles are raining down on Baghdad, and the violence is all the more shocking for the scenes of normality that preceded it.

In contrast to the sanitized images the Western public continues to be fed after three years of gruesome war, this documentary gives it to you straight. Homes are destroyed, civilians are torn apart by bombs, and blood is spattered everywhere.

We are introduced to victims of U.S. cluster bomb attacks, including a young girl with shrapnel embedded in an eye. “We don’t kill innocent people,” insists a U.S. soldier at one

point in the film, but everywhere the evidence contradicts him. Cluster bombs, anti-personnel in nature, could have no other result than to kill innocent people, dropped as they were in residential neighborhoods.

Contrary to claims by the Bush administration that Iraqi civilians would greet U.S. troops as liberators, we see tanks and vehicles rolling down deserted Baghdad streets as residents nervously watch from their windows. Later, the film takes us to several mass demonstrations in opposition to occupation, in which the anger is only magnified by the death and destruction we have witnessed.

Among the interviews with U.S. soldiers some parrot the pro-war line. But others, sensitive enough to recognize that reality is at stark contrast with the propaganda, are clearly uncomfortable with the filmmaker’s direct questions. “They don’t understand why they are in Iraq,” explained Watai in an interview. “They say ‘to liberate the Iraqi people or help them,’ but they are just saying that. It’s not from deep in their minds.”

The U.S. documentaries on the subject of Iraq that I have seen tend to tell the stories of Americans in Iraq and inform us of what we already know. Watai, however, has a more empathetic approach, forcing us to acknowledge what the war has done to the Iraqi people. As a result, we discover far more about the war and the dis-

LITTLE BIRDS (RITORU BAAZU –
IRAKU SENKA NO KAZOKU-TACHI) (2004)
DIR. TAKEHARU WATAI

aster it has wrought on the society. The filmmaker had confidence enough in his material to forgo music and narration, and indeed, none was needed. *Little Birds* is a film of such power that it leaves its audience speechless at the end.

It is a shame that this brilliant documentary remains without distribution in the United States. *Little Birds* ought to be required viewing for anyone still clinging to the notion of war as a selfless act of heroic benevolence.

—GREGORY ELICH

Gregory Elich is the author of *Strange Liberators: Militarism, Mayhem, and The Pursuit of Profit.*



Kaufmann is more interested in what the SI didn’t do, how small it remained and how suddenly it disappeared. There were no SI battalions in May ’68, but their invisible hand is evident in the slogans still remembered today: “Take your desires for realities;” “Demand the impossible.”

Naturally, talking about an invisible actor makes for some repetitive and overly rhetorical moments. Long passages in the middle of the book become proof of Debord’s insistence that “the more well received our ideas, the shadier we will become.” Kaufmann occasionally lapses into wistfulness and does not give context for the uninitiated. Overheated defenses of Debord against previous paper-tiger biographers also make an unwelcome appearance.

Kaufmann returns to solid ground with a unique reading of Debord’s most famous book, *The Society of the Spectacle*. Since the concept of the spectacle cannot be historically situated, (always leading back to a proto-communist paradise before the fall), he claims that perhaps the concept functions as a way of setting off the world, throwing everything into quotations and thereby with a good deal of irony and caustic humor finding a place for oneself. This resistance is what gives Debord his coherence. Despite a recent spate of interest, he has remained interior to himself, and at some level indecipherable, a privilege usually reserved exclusively to the spectacle.

There are very few photos of Guy Debord. Perhaps because of this he has often been described as complex, inscrutable or obscure. This book does well to demonstrate the willful misunderstanding this position entails. Debord and the avant-

gardes he led simply made a conscious choice, “a bet on obscurity,” in order to avoid being ensnared by “the spectacle”. Kaufman admires Debord’s consistency, his refusal to develop.

Remaining clandestine was also a way to avoid growing up. And to that effect, Kaufmann calls the SI’s project a “rereading of Marx by Peter Pan.” Its members, “lost boys,” wandered the hidden passages of Paris and whatever else remained obscure, radically refused the world as it was. Their reward was May 1968. And their own disappearance completed their “historical necessity.”

Their ideas though, are still lying in wait, just beyond appearances, right where they are most at home.

—GABRIEL RIOCABO

BOOKS

Guilty Civilians

AMONG THE DEAD CITIES:
THE HISTORY AND MORAL
LEGACY OF THE WWII
BOMBING OF CIVILIANS IN
GERMANY AND JAPAN
BY A.C. GRAYLING
WALKER & COMPANY (2006)

If it is true that a nation is united by lies about its past and hatred of a common enemy, then give A.C. Grayling credit for trying to remedy this. *Among the Dead Cities* places the Allied bombing campaigns against Germany

and Japan in the context of history’s efforts to humanize warfare. He writes with the twin convictions that World War II was “a just war against morally criminal enemies” and that “we owe it to our future to get matters right about the past.”

Dead Cities takes us to a time when air travel was breathtakingly new and death from the air was as unthinkable as jets crashing into the Twin Towers. After the shocking experiences of World War I, governments gathered in Geneva and The Hague to consider such proposals as outlawing “aerial bombardment for the purpose of terrorizing civilian populations.” Ironically, just as these negotiations collapsed in the run-up to WWII, the United Kingdom and United States were considering whether to make bombing a war crime.

Using sources that include government bombing surveys, academic histories and personal diaries, Grayling examines three Allied bombing campaigns: Britain against Germany, the United States against Germany and the United States against Japan.

He finds that despite each government’s stated policy of avoiding civilian targets leaders sought to “undermine morale” with “area bombing.” It was only the U.S. campaign against Germany in which the stated policy of limiting air attacks to military targets matched the action. In fact, wartime German reports make clear U.S. “precision” targeting of oil depots had a devastating impact on the Nazi war machine.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of bombs were dropped on civilian targets even after the Allied leadership agreed that winning was largely a matter of time. Although

London initially chose to shift from daylight “precision” raids to night “area” raids simply because it couldn’t afford to lose planes or pilots, this policy of carpet bombing continued nearly until Germany’s surrender.

By contrast, Japanese civilians were always a target. The firebombing of Tokyo on March 9-10, 1945, in which 100,000-185,000 were killed, remains the deadliest single air raid in history. Its planner, Curtis LeMay, offered his thoughts: “There are no innocent civilians... The entire population got into the act and worked to make those airplanes or munitions... men, women and children.” Months later, President Truman would announce that the first use of an atomic bomb was against a “military target.”

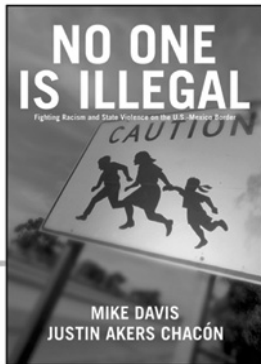
Given London’s earlier experience as Germany’s main bombing target, it is revealing that opposition to Britain’s bombing of civilians was much stronger in the capital than the rest of Britain.

When a leading opponent, Vera Brittain, pointed out that bombing civilians to “shorten the war,” thereby protecting air crews, was morally equivalent to an infantryman advancing behind a mother with child, she was viciously attacked.

No certainty for the justness of any cause can lead to certainty regarding methods. As U.S. Admiral Ralph Ofstie, member of the Strategic Bombing Survey, testified to Congress, “Must we translate the historical mistake of World War II into a permanent concept merely to avoid clouding the prestige of those who led us down the wrong road in the past?”

—RICHARD FITZER

ISBN 1-931859-35-3



\$12

No One Is Illegal debunks the leading ideas behind the often-violent right-wing backlash against immigrants by putting a human face on the immigrants who risk their lives crossing the border to work in the United States.

MIKE DAVIS AND
JUSTIN AKERS CHACÓN
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“In an environment where the Right sets the agenda and where liberal opposition sidelines itself in the debate, any discussion of immigration is corrupted by a litany of lies and deceptions. While vigilantes go unchallenged in the streets, so too do the misconceptions that they exploit to take advantage of peoples’ fears and uncertainties. While opposition has been absent from liberal organizations, grassroots efforts ... will determine in which direction immigration politics will go in the next years.”

From *No One is Illegal*

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Monday, September 11th @ 7PM - FREE
“Voices of Resistance: Muslim Women on War, Faith and Sexuality”

A collection of writing by Muslim women, whose experiences are particularly poignant in today’s politically and religiously charged climate. One woman mourns the death of a cousin killed in a suicide bombing, while another confronts sexism and hypocrisy on a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. A transsexual remembers with fondness the donning of the veil he no longer wears as a man.

Tuesday, September 12th @ 7PM - FREE
Reading: T Cooper, Johnny Temple and friends
“Hijacked History”

The new anthology “A Fictional History of the United States With Huge Chunks Missing” seeks to challenge the stories we’ve been told, and create counter-narratives to the mainstream version of American history.

Wednesday, September 13th @ 7PM - FREE
Reading: Cristina Biaggi “The Rule of Mars: The History and Impact of Patriarchy”

Why have men come to dominate women in so many recent societies? Cristina Biaggi’s new book is a provocative collection of the best writings by leading scholars on the subject of patriarchy – how it developed into the dominant social system, how it has been maintained, and what its impact has been on contemporary life.

Thursday, September 14th @ 7PM \$5 Suggested
Performance: Una Aya Osato “Keep It Movin”

“Keep It Movin” is a one woman show about how women of color in the US come to consciousness. Incorporating theater, poetry, dance and video, the play explores the lives of ten women of color. Born and raised in NYC, playwright Una Aya Osato is a performer, educator and babysitter.

THE INDEPENDENT AUGUST 31 – SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

11



NEW YORKERS PROTEST TO END ISRAELI AGGRESSION
ASTORIA QUEENS AUGUST 27—Two weeks after the proclaimed ‘ceasefire’ in Lebanon, a group of 200 gathered in Athens Park, Queens for a march and rally to oppose Israeli aggression against Lebanon and Palestine. The diverse crowd included area residents, activist organizations, and a large number of families with children. Police were present but the event remained peaceful.
More photos at <http://nyc.indymedia.org>

PHOTO: ULA KURAS

THE INDYPENDENT

has open meetings every Tuesday at 7pm
imc-nyc-print@lists.indymedia.org at
4 West 43rd St., room 311.

FRI SEPT 1

7pm • \$5-10 suggested
DISCUSSION: “SEEDS OF THE NEW”
W/Chris Carlsson, author of *Critical Mass: Bicycling’s Defiant Celebration*. People are setting the foundation, technically & socially, for a genuine movement of liberation from market life.
Bluestockings, 172 Allen St.
212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com • teamcolors.blogspot.com

MON SEPT 4

All Day • FREE
FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM ACTION
Campaign in which immigrants & citizens personally impacted by deportation take to the streets to raise their voices against immigration laws that are destroying families & communities. At West Indian Day Parade, Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn.
Families for Freedom • 718-858-9658
x204, aarti@familiesforfreedom.org

TUE SEPT 5

8pm • FREE
DISCUSSION: HELP STOP THE GENOCIDE IN SUDAN. Ruth Messinger presents, “Ruth Messinger Bears Witness,” gives a firsthand account of the ongoing genocidal campaign going on in Darfur, Sudan. This is a chance for those new to the issue to learn more, and for those with knowledge to show solidarity and energize themselves for the Save Darfur Rally on Sept. 17.
Forest Hills Jewish Center 106-06
Queens Boulevard, Forest Hills.
DarfurNY@gmail.com

FRI SEPT 8

8:30am – 12pm • FREE
DISCUSSION: PEACEFUL TOMORROW’S PRESENTS, “GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS TO INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS.” Come listen to a panel of international speakers including Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams.
15 Barclay St. at Broadway, Woolworth Building • 919-608-7322
for speakers, visit peacefultomorrow.org

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

september

6pm • \$10
MUSIC: CONCERT ON EVE OF 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11. Musical feast of cultural diversity. W/Margot Leverett (Klezmer clarinet & sax), Michel Baklout (percussionist w/foremost Lebanese singer Fairuz), Hanna Khoury (Western/Arabic styles), Udi Bar-David (cello soloist, Philadelphia Orchestra, founder Intercultural Journeys), Shoba Sharma (performer of Bharata Natyam, Indian storytelling, dance), Keisha Hutchins (vocalist, classical/folk/jazz/more).
Unitarian Church of All Souls
1157 Lexington Ave. & 80th St. \$10; reception in Reidy Friendship Hall after concert.
212-535-5530 • peacetaskforceny.org/PTEvents.htm • allsoulsnyc.org

MON SEPT 11

7pm • FREE
READING: “VOICES OF RESISTANCE: MUSLIM WOMEN ON WAR, FAITH & SEXUALITY.” A woman mourns the death of a cousin killed in a suicide bombing, while another confronts sexism & hypocrisy on a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. A transsexual remembers the donning of the veil he no longer wears as a Muslim man.
Bluestockings, 172 Allen St.
212-777-6028 • myspace.com/bluestockingsny • bluestockings.com

8pm • \$12 / \$10 advance
CONCERT: TIM TUTTLE’S 5TH ANNUAL “MUSIC FROM GROUND ZERO”
Tim Tuttle and friends on the fifth anniversary of the events of 9/11. Come join for an evening of music that brings hope, remembrance, love, and joy.
The Knitting Factory
74 Leonard St. • 212-219-3132

6:30pm • FREE
LADIES BIKE REPAIR NIGHT
Come learn the basics of bicycle repair from female mechanics at our workshop designed by and for women. You will learn on our bicycles (you can apply what you’ve learned to your own bike on Thursday nights). No previous experience with bicycle repair required – or expected.
49 E. Houston St. (between Mott & Mulberry).

TUE SEPT 12

4pm • FREE
RALLY/MARCH: DEMAND THE FREEDOM OF THE CUBAN 5 jailed for infiltrating Cuban-American rightwing terrorist organizations in Miami to monitor their actions. Bring flags, banners & noisemakers. Meet at Times Sq. military recruitment center at 43rd St. btw. 7th Ave. & B’way, march to Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, E 47th St & 1st Ave.) • 718-601-4751
freethecubanfive@hotmail.com

7pm • FREE
READING: “HIJACKED HISTORY.” W T Cooper, Johnny Temple & friends, editors & contributors to new anthology, *A Fictional History of the U.S. w/Huge Chunks Missing*. “Seeks to challenge the stories we’ve been told, & create counter-narratives to the mainstream version of American history.”
Bluestockings, 172 Allen St.
212-777-6028 • myspace.com/bluestockingsny • bluestockings.com

WED SEPT 13, OCT 11, NOV 8, NOV 29

6pm • \$7, FREE FOR MEMBERS
FILM: NOW-NYC FALL FEMINIST FILM SERIES. *If These Walls Could Talk, Antonia’s Line, Sex Slaves, Real Women Have Curves*. Brooklyn Law School, Gerald Cafe, Feil Hall, 205 State St., 212-627-9895 • nownyc.org

WED SEPT 13

7pm • \$15 suggested
FILM/BENEFIT: NY PREMIERE OF *YOUNG, JEWISH & LEFT*. Q&A w/the filmmakers & individuals featured in the film, including Director, Dara Silverman. Anthology Film Archives, 32 2nd Ave. Info/RSVP: Helena Tubis • 212-647-8966
x14, helena@jfrefj.org

SEPT 13 & 14

Fri. 10:30am – 5:30pm, Sat. 9:30-5pm • \$8
ROUNDTABLE: WHAT COMES AFTER: CITIES, ART AND RECOVERY. Artists, writers, architects and scholars from around the world converge for a series of roundtable discussions, performances, films, and art installations in all media devoted to considering how societies remember and rebuild after catastrophic events. Theresa Lang Community and Center • 55 West 13th Street, 2nd floor.

THU SEPT 14

4 – 6pm • FREE
TALK: TRADE & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN CHILE. W/Carlos Furche, Chile’s chief trade negotiator; has been playing a key role in Chile’s enhanced relations w/Asia & the Pacific. CUNY Grad Center, 365 5th Ave., President’s Conference Room, 9th floor. Reserve (seating limited) • 212-817-2099, biidner@gc.cuny.edu

6:30pm • FREE
EVENT: “WHERE DO HUMAN RIGHTS BEGIN?” Performance & talks on human rights challenges in the US, including the death penalty, detentions & deportations, poverty, & violence & discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion & sexuality. With Larry Cox (Amnesty Int’l USA), Ajamu Baraka (U.S. Human Rights Network), poet Roger Bonaire, performer La Bruja. Riverside Church, W 122nd St. & Claremont Ave. • breakthrough.tv

7pm • \$5 suggested
PERFORMANCE: “KEEP IT MOVIN’.” W/UNA AYA OSATO. one-woman show about how women of color in the U.S. come to consciousness. with theater, poetry, dance & video, play. Explores the lives of 10 women of color. Bluestockings, 172 Allen St.
212-777-6028 • myspace.com/bluestockingsny • bluestockings.com

WED SEPT 20

Nonfiction Forum: BITCHfest
6:30pm • \$5
Lisa Jarvis and Andi Zeisler present BITCHfest: Ten Years of Cultural Criticism from the Pages of Bitch Magazine; moderated by Robert Polito. Sponsored by the Writing Program.
66 West 12th Street, room 510

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